

## WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A portable electronic device comprising:  
2 a user interface;  
3 a lighting circuit including a light source to illuminate the user interface; and  
4 a control circuit coupled to the lighting circuit, the control circuit having a  
5 delayed operation mode wherein a first activation of the user interface illuminates the  
6 user interface without performing any other operation of the device and a second  
7 activation of the user interface performs an operation of the device other than  
8 illuminating the user interface.
- 1 2. The portable electronic device of claim 1, wherein:  
2 the control circuit has a delayed operation mode; and  
3 the user interface includes a display and an input device wherein, during the  
4 delayed operation mode, a first activation of the input device illuminates the display  
5 without performing any other operation of the device and a second activation of the  
6 input device performs an operation of the device other than illuminating the display.
- 1 3. The portable electronic device of claim 1, further comprising a light sensor to  
2 determine ambient lighting conditions about the user interface and generate an  
3 ambient lighting signal based on the ambient lighting conditions.
- 1 4. The portable electronic device of claim 3, wherein the delayed operation mode  
2 is effective when the control circuit determines that the ambient lighting signal is  
3 below a minimum illumination level.

- 1 5. The portable electronic device of claim 3, wherein the lighting circuit
- 2 illuminates the user interface for a particular duration when the ambient lighting
- 3 signal is at a low level and the lighting circuit illuminates the user interface for a
- 4 shorter duration when the ambient lighting signal is greater than the low level.

1 6. A portable electronic device comprising:  
2 an input device;  
3 a lighting circuit including a light source to illuminate the input device;  
4 a light sensor being effective to determine ambient lighting conditions about  
5 the input device and generate an ambient lighting signal based on the ambient lighting  
6 conditions; and  
7 a control circuit coupled to the light sensor and the lighting circuit, the control  
8 circuit receiving the ambient lighting signal from the light sensor and activating the  
9 lighting circuit to illuminate the input device based on the ambient lighting signal.

1 7. The portable electronic device of claim 6, wherein the control circuit has a  
2 delayed operation mode wherein a first activation of the input device illuminates the  
3 input device without performing any other operation of the device and a second  
4 activation of the input device performs an operation of the device other than  
5 illuminating the input device.

1 8. The portable electronic device of claim 7, wherein the delayed operation mode  
2 is effective when the control circuit determines that the ambient lighting signal is  
3 below a minimum illumination level.

1 9. The portable electronic device of claim 6, wherein the lighting circuit  
2 illuminates the input device for a particular duration when the ambient lighting signal  
3 is at a low level and the lighting circuit illuminates the input device for a shorter  
4 duration when the ambient lighting signal is greater than the low level.

1 10. The portable electronic device of claim 6, wherein:  
2 the lighting circuit illuminates the input device for a minimum duration when  
3 the ambient lighting signal is at or above a maximum threshold level;  
4 the lighting circuit illuminates the input device for a maximum duration when  
5 the ambient lighting signal is below a minimum threshold level; and  
6 the lighting circuit illuminates the input device for an intermediate duration  
7 when the ambient lighting signal is below the maximum threshold level and at or  
8 above the minimum threshold level.

1 11. A portable electronic device comprising:  
2 a user interface;  
3 a lighting circuit including a light source to illuminate the user interface; and  
4 a control circuit coupled to the lighting circuit, the control circuit receiving a  
5 reverse bias signal generated by the lighting circuit when incident with ambient  
6 lighting about the user interface and activating the lighting circuit to illuminate the  
7 user interface based on the ambient lighting.

1 12. The portable electronic device of claim 11, wherein:  
2 the control circuit has a delayed operation mode; and  
3 the user interface includes a display and an input device wherein, during the  
4 delayed operation mode, a first activation of the input device illuminates the display  
5 without performing any other operation of the device and a second activation of the  
6 input device performs an operation of the device other than illuminating the display.

1 13. The portable electronic device of claim 12, wherein the delayed operation  
2 mode is effective when the control circuit determines that the ambient lighting is  
3 below a minimum illumination level.

1 14. The portable electronic device of claim 11, wherein the lighting circuit  
2 illuminates the user interface for a particular duration when the ambient lighting is at  
3 a low level and the lighting circuit illuminates the user interface for a shorter duration  
4 when the ambient lighting is greater than the low level.

1 15. The portable electronic device of claim 11, wherein:  
2 the lighting circuit illuminates the user interface for a minimum duration when  
3 the ambient lighting is at or above a maximum threshold level;  
4 the lighting circuit illuminates the user interface for a maximum duration  
5 when the ambient lighting is below a minimum threshold level; and  
6 the lighting circuit illuminates the user interface for an intermediate duration  
7 when the ambient lighting is below the maximum threshold level and at or above the  
8 minimum threshold level.

1 16. A method of illuminating a user interface of a portable electronic device, the  
2 user interface including a display and an input device, the method comprising the  
3 steps of:

4 determining ambient lighting conditions about the user interface;

5 generating an ambient lighting signal based on the ambient lighting

6 conditions; and

7 detecting a first activation of the user interface;

8 illuminating the user interface in response to detecting the first activation

9 without performing any other operation of the device;

10 detecting a second activation of the user interface; and

11 performing an operation of the device other than illuminating the user  
12 interface.

1 17. The method of claim 16, wherein:

2 the step of detecting a first activation includes the step of detecting a first  
3 activation of the input device;

4 the step of illuminating includes the step of illuminating the display in

5 response to detecting the first activation without performing any other operation of the  
6 device;

7 the step of detecting a second activation includes the step of detecting a

8 second activation of the input device; and

9 the step of performing includes the step of performing an operation of the  
10 device other than illuminating the display.

1 18. The method of claim 16 further comprising, before the step of detecting the  
2 first activation, the step of determining that the ambient lighting signal is below a  
3 minimum illumination level.

1 19. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of illuminating includes the steps of  
2 illuminating the user interface for a particular duration when the ambient lighting  
3 signal is at a low level and illuminating the user interface for a shorter duration when  
4 the ambient lighting signal is greater than the low level.

1 20. The method of claim 16, wherein the step of illuminating includes the steps of:  
2 illuminating the user interface for a minimum duration when the ambient  
3 lighting signal is at or above a maximum threshold level;  
4 illuminating the user interface for a maximum duration when the ambient  
5 lighting signal is below a minimum threshold level; and  
6 illuminating the user interface for an intermediate duration when the ambient  
7 lighting signal is below the maximum threshold level and at or above the minimum  
8 threshold level.